

# VERMONT TELEGRAPH.

ORSON S. MURRAY, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

"I AM SET FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL."

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## TERMS OF THE TELEGRAPH.

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## PROCEEDINGS

Of the Board of Managers of the American Bible Society, in reference to the subject of providing aid to print and circulate versions of the Scriptures made by Baptist Missionaries.

American Bible Society's House, New-York, August 6th, 1835.

At the regular meeting of the Board of Managers, Mr. Brigham presented a letter from F. A. Packard, dated Philadelphia, July 28, 1835, sending an extract from a letter addressed to him by Mr. Pearce, of Calcutta, Baptist Missionary, asking whether aid could be had from the American Bible Society, in printing the Bengalee Scriptures, translated on the principle adopted by the American Baptist Missionaries in Burmah.

The letter was referred to the Committee on distribution.

Bible Society's House, September 3, 1835.

The Committee on distribution reported the following Resolution, as the result of their deliberations upon the subject referred to them at the last meeting of the Board, viz:

"Resolved, that the Committee do not deem it expedient to recommend an appropriation, until the Board settle a principle in relation to the translation of the Greek word *Baptizo*."

After discussion, the resolution was passed, and the subject referred to a Special Committee of seven, one from each denomination represented in the Board of Managers, viz:

THOMAS MACAULEY, Chairman.

Spencer H. Cone,

James Milnor,

Thomas Dewitt,

Francis Hall,

Wm. H. Van Vleck,

Thomas Cook.

Bible Society's House, October 1, 1835.

The Special Committee presented the following Report:

The Committee to whom was referred, the report of the Distributing Committee on the application of Messrs. Pearce and Yates, of Calcutta, for aid to print the New Testament in the Bengalee language, beg leave to report, that they attended to the important subject committed to them, and that in the investigation of it, the following facts have come before them.

1. The Rev. Messrs. Pearce & Yates, Baptist Missionaries in or near Calcutta, have made application to this Board, for aid in publishing the New Testament in the Bengalee language, in which version the Greek words *Baptizo*, *Baptisma*, and their cognates, are translated by words signifying *immerse*, *immersion*, &c.

2. In the Burmese version of the New Testament, and in other versions in the languages and dialects of India, these words are translated in like manner.

3. Application has been made to the Calcutta Bible Society, and to the British and Foreign Bible Society, for aid to print and circulate the Bengalee New Testament, translated as aforesaid, which aid has been refused on the ground of its containing said translations; And

4. Your Committee were not aware until now, that such translations were made and approved by any denomination of Christians in India, or other heathen countries.

Your Committee would therefore most respectfully submit, whether it is not highly inexpedient to aid in printing or circulating any version of the Scriptures containing the above or any similar translations, differing from the sense of the authorized versions, for the following reasons:

1. The words *Baptizo* and *Baptisma*, and their cognates being left untranslated, as in the English and many other excellent versions, impose no difficulty on any denomination of Christians, as it leaves every minister, or missionary, at perfect liberty to explain them according to the peculiar views of his particular denomination.

2. The words *Baptizo*, *Baptisma*, &c. being translated *immerse*, *immersion*, &c. will necessarily embarrass, if not wholly exclude, the operations of Missionaries of the Methodist, Moravian, Reformed Dutch, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, or other Christian denominations, who may endeavour to propagate the Gospel in India, or where the said translations may obtain. And

3. It is not competent for the American Bible Society, to assume any sectarian attitude, by favoring the denominational views of any particular church either at home or abroad.

With these views of the subject, your Committee most respectfully submit the following resolutions:

1. Resolved, That the Board of Managers deem it inexpedient to appropriate any funds belonging to the Society, in aid of translating or distributing the aforesaid Bengalee New Testament, or any other version, containing the aforesaid translations, or any similar translations.

2. Resolved, That the Board of Managers on receiving satisfactory evidence of such corrections having been made in the aforesaid translation of the Bengalee New Testament, or other versions in other languages, or dialects, as will comport with the known views of other Christian denominations; or in other words, with the obvious intention of the authorized English version, with most cheerfully aid in the printing and circulation of said version or versions as heretofore.

3. Resolved, That all persons interested in the foregoing resolutions, be informed of their purport forthwith.

All which is most respectfully submitted.

THOMAS MACAULEY, Chairman.

James Milnor,

Thomas Cook,

Thomas Dewitt,

Francis Hall,

Wm. H. Van Vleck.

COUNTER REPORT.

The Committee to whom was referred the application of Messrs. Pearce and Yates, of Calcutta, for aid to print and circulate the New Testament in the Bengalee language, have not been so happy as to unite in their views upon the subject; and the subscriber deems it a duty he owes both to the American Bible Society, and to the Baptist denomination, briefly to state some of the considerations which have constrained him to dissent from the report presented by the majority of the Committee.

At the anniversary in May 1834, the American Bible Society Resolved to distribute the Bible among all the accessible population of the globe, within the shortest practicable period; and by direction of the Board of Managers, a circular was addressed to Missionaries and Missionary Societies of different religious denominations, encouraging them to expect, that whenever the Old Testament or the New, or any one entire Gospel or other book of the Bible, should be correctly translated and ready (without note or comment) for the press, they should receive the aid requisite for the publication of the same.

The application of Messrs. Pearce and Yates is but a response to this circular, and it is manifestly unjust to refuse their request, on the ground of their having rendered the words *Baptizo*, *Baptisma*, and their cognates, by words signifying *immerse*, *immersion*, &c., until it is first proved that the translations are *unfaithful and inaccurate*; and this it is confidently believed never can be done.

When Missionaries are sent among the heathen, it is that they may make themselves thoroughly acquainted with their language, and with as little delay as possible, give them the Bible in appropriate vernacular terms, that they may read in their own tongue wherein they were born, the wonderful works of God. They must neither obscure, nor take from, nor add to the words of the Holy Book. The question therefore, is most respectfully submitted, whether it is competent for the American Bible Society, to control the consciences of well qualified Evangelical Missionaries in this matter, and decide, what words they shall transfer, and what words they may translate.

It is conceived that the principle reported by the majority of the Committee on this point, is radically wrong; if so, the Board of Managers have no right to forbid the translation of *Baptizo*, or of any other word, the meaning of which is satisfactorily ascertained; but if the principle objected to be correct, then their authoritative dictation may embrace whatever words to them shall seem good; and the Missionary hereafter in the work of translation, instead of making it his single aim to please God, must consult primarily the views and wishes of earthly patrons.

It is a source of deep regret that the prevailing sentiment of the Report of the majority, appears to be so entirely inconsistent with the spirit of benevolence and brotherly kindness which first called into existence the American Bible Society.—Seven or eight different denominations of Christians associated themselves together for the purpose of supplying not only their own land with the Scriptures, but of extending their influence to other countries whether Christian, Mahomedan or Pagan. In the prosecution of their common objects, no one of the constituent members was either required or expected to abandon his own peculiar tenets. Baptists were received as Baptists, and as such have laboured with you from the beginning.

Must it not occasion surprise as well as grief that now, after an harmonious co-operation in the Bible cause of more than eighteen years, it is proposed to pass the sweeping uncompromising resolution, "that it is inexpedient to appropriate any funds belonging to the Society in aid of translating or distributing any versions of the Sacred Scriptures as now made by the Baptist Missionaries." Are we by this single vote to be cut off for ever from all participation in your funds, a large portion of which has accrued from the subscriptions and liberal bequests of our denomination? And are Baptist Missionaries of all others to be singled out as unworthy to share in the labours and successes of the American Bible Society in her noble enterprise to supply the world with Bibles? And are we to be told in so many words, that the only condition upon which you can countenance our efforts in the preparation of such versions as will comport with the known views of other Christian denominations! a condition, which involves in it the impracticable alternative of forbearing to do that which in our hearts we believe God has required at our hands.

The idea suggested that versions to be approved must not materially differ from the "sense of the authorized English version" is most strange. We have been taught to believe that the sense of the Holy Ghost is to be invariably and most critically preserved. The sentiment may be very gratifying in its adaptation to a special case, but the majority of the Committee would scarcely advocate it, as a general principle applicable to Biblical translations. The man who should translate *meta pascha*, Acts xii. 4, by a phrase signifying *after Easter*, would give the sense of the English version; but alas, he would not convey the sense of the Spirit of inspiration.

The words *Baptizo*, &c., have been rendered by words signifying to *immerse*, &c., in the Syriac, Arabic, Abyssinian, Egyptian, Ethiopic, Coptic, German, Dutch, Danish, and many other languages. Is it just, is it fair then, to stigmatize our translations as sectarian, when similar translations have been long in use in almost all the churches of the Eastern world, and in most of the Churches of Northern Europe? The American Bible Society has circulated many copies of the Bible "containing the aforesaid translations," she has circulated many more in the versions of Roman Catholic Priests. She has voted within two years past a larger sum for the Chinese Scriptures, than for any other Foreign object, and yet Dr. Morrison has neither transferred *Baptizo*, nor translated it, but has introduced into his Chinese version a paraphrase signifying "a water Ceremony."

In connection with these facts let it be remembered, that the American Christian public expect us speedily to send the Bible throughout the earth; that they are generously furnishing us with the means to accomplish this desirable object; that our Treasury is overflowing, and the managers are at a loss to know how their surplus funds may be wisely and beneficially expended; that the Baptist Missionaries have translated the Scriptures into the languages of India, as well as of other Asiatic nations; that to refuse them aid, will at least be greatly to retard, if not to render impracticable for a long time to come, the supply of the reading population of the globe with the written word! Oh, let it not be forgotten, that millions of our fellow men are perishing for the bread of life, and stretching out their hands, crying "Come over and help us!" In view of these facts let it be asked, is this the time, and are these the circumstances, which the Board will choose, to announce to the Saints of the most High their rejection of the application of those men of God, who for more than twenty years under the burning rays of an Indian sun, have been praying, and toiling, and agonizing, for the souls of men? we *rejoice*; and under the influence of this hope, venture to propose the following resolutions, viz:

1. Resolved, that this Board is impressed with feelings of devout gratitude to Almighty God, for the signal protection he has afforded to Baptist Missionaries in heathen lands, and for the ability given them to translate the Bible into the living languages of so large a portion of the human family.

2. As satisfactory evidence has been furnished from the principal professors in the College of Fort William, India, and from the most learned Pandits and Teachers in Calcutta and its vicinity, that the improved version of the Bengalee New Testament by Messrs. Pearce and Yates, Baptist Missionaries, is by far the most intelligible, idiomatic, and perfect translation, which has yet appeared in that dialect; Therefore,

Resolved, That the sum of \$ be appropriated and paid to the Baptist General Convention of the United States for Foreign Missions, to aid in printing and circulating the Sacred Scriptures in the Bengalee language.

Respectfully Submitted,

SPENCER H. CONE.

Society's House, November 5, 1835.

The Board proceeded to consider the reports of the Committee presented at the last meeting.

Mr. Brigham read a letter from Dr. Wayland, dated Providence, October 26, 1835, submitting a Resolution; Dr. Milnor, also presented a series of resolutions. After some discussion, the letter of Dr.

Wayland, the resolutions of Dr. Milnor, and the original reports, were all referred back to the same Committee for further consideration and report.

Society's House, November 5, 1835.

The following Report and Counter Report were presented.

The Committee to whom was recommended the determining of a principle upon which the American Bible Society will aid in printing and distributing the Bible in foreign languages, beg leave to report:

That they are of the opinion, that it is expedient to withdraw their former report on the particular case, and to present the following one on the general principle.

By the constitution of the American Bible Society, its Managers are, in the circulating of the Holy Scriptures, restricted to such copies as are without note or comment, and in the English language, to the version in common use. The design of these restrictions clearly seems to have been to simplify and mark out the duties of the Society; so that all the religious denominations, of which it is composed, might harmoniously unite in performing those duties.

As the Managers are now called to aid extensively in circulating the Sacred Scriptures in languages other than the English, they deem it their duty, in conformity with the obvious spirit of their compact, to adopt the following resolution as the rule of their conduct in making appropriations for the circulation of the Scriptures in all foreign tongues:

1. Resolved, That in appropriating money for the translating, printing, or distributing of the Sacred Scriptures in foreign languages, the Managers feel at liberty to encourage only such versions as conform to the principle of their translation to the common English version; at least so far as that all the religious denominations represented in this Society, can consistently use and circulate said versions in their several schools and communities.

2. Resolved, That a copy of the above preamble and resolution be sent to each of the Missionary Boards accustomed to receive pecuniary grants from the Society, with a request that the same may be transmitted to their respective Mission stations, where the Scriptures are in process of translation; and also that the said several Mission Boards be informed that their application for aid must be accompanied with a declaration that the versions which they propose to circulate, are executed in accordance with the above resolution.

THOMAS MACAULEY, Chairman.

James Milnor,

Thomas Dewitt,

Thomas Cook,

Wm. H. Van Vleck,

Francis Hall.

COUNTER REPORT.

The subscriber as a member of the Committee to whom was referred the application of Messrs. Pearce and Yates for aid in the circulation of the Bengalee New Testament, begs leave to submit the following consideration:

1. The Baptist Board of Foreign Missions have not been under the impression that the American Bible Society was organized upon the neutral principle that *Baptizo* and its cognates were never to be translated, but always transferred, in all versions of the scriptures patronized by them. Had this principle been candidly stated and uniformly acted upon by the Society in the appropriation of its funds for foreign distribution, the Baptists never could have been guilty of the folly or duplicity of soliciting aid for translations made by their Missionaries.

2. As there is now a large balance in the treasury of the American Bible Society, as many liberal bequests and donations have been made by Baptists, and as these were made in the full confidence that the Society could constitutionally assist their own denomination, as well as the other evangelical denominations composing the National Institution, in giving the Bible to the heathen world; therefore,

Resolved, That \$ be appropriated and paid to the Baptist General Convention of the U. S. for Foreign Missions, to aid them in the work of supplying the perishing millions of the East with the sacred scriptures.

SPENCER H. CONE.

After debate, the further consideration of the subject was postponed to the next regular meeting of the Board.

Society's House, Dec. 3, 1835.

The Board proceeded to consider the first Resolution reported by the Committee; a motion to lay the Resolution on the table having prevailed, the Hon. Wm. Jay submitted resolutions proposing to give the subject to a new Committee. After a long and animated discussion, the whole subject was laid upon the table.

Society's House, Feb. 4, 1836.

The Report of the Committee presented Nov. 19, 1835 was taken up, and after debating the first Resolution, the Board adjourned to Feb. 17, 1836, at four o'clock P. M.

Society's House, Feb. 17, 1836.

The Board met pursuant to adjournment.

The Report of the Committee, submitted to the Board, Nov. 19, 1835, was again

discussed at great length. Motions to lay it upon the table, to raise a new committee, and to postpone indefinitely, having been successively lost, THE REPORT WAS FINALLY PASSED BY A VOTE OF THIRTY TO FOURTEEN;—and the Board adjourned.

To the General Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions;

DEAR BRETHREN,

The deep interest so generally felt in the benevolent design of giving to the destitute families of the earth, in the shortest practicable period, the pure and undiluted Word of God, and the official relationship I have the honor to sustain to the Convention, have rendered the present address indispensable.

Since our meeting in Pichmond, the Board of Managers of the American Bible Society have settled a principle by which to be governed in all future appropriations for Scriptures in Foreign Tongues, and the historical sketch given of the proceedings of the Board in reference to this subject, clearly evinces its difficulty and importance. It was fully, freely, and repeatedly discussed, and was finally carried by a large majority. This decision therefore is to be considered as of no doubtful character, but as most deliberate and determinate; and its practical effect will be to deprive the Baptists of all participation in the funds of the National Institution, so far as the printing and distribution of the versions of our Missionaries are concerned.

The Baptist members of the Board of the American Bible Society, are not chargeable with having provoked this painful result; but on the contrary, are conscious of having done every thing in their power to prevent it. They deprecated the adoption of the principle in question, and strenuously opposed it as an unconstitutional, unscriptural, impracticable, and unjust.

The Constitution does indeed restrict the circulation of the Scriptures in the English Language to the version now in common use, but at the same time proposes to extend its influence to Foreign Lands, without any such restriction. That this is the true construction, is proved by the letter and spirit of the original address to the people of the United States, presented by the Convention which formed the American Bible Society. Speaking of the Society, they say—"its members are leagued in that, and in that alone, which calls up every hallowed principle—the dissemination of the Scriptures in the received versions where they exist, and in the most faithful where they are required. They will embrace with thankfulness and pleasure every opportunity of raying out, by means of the Bible, according to their ability, the light of life and immortality, to such parts of the world as are destitute of the blessing, and are within their reach."

In this high vocation their ambition is to be fellow-workers with them who are fellow-workers with God." Before this address was published, the Bengalee New Testament had passed through five editions, and was in the hands of thousands of the inhabitants of India; it was the received version. And as to the Burmese, have they not required the Bible? And where can a more faithful translation be found, than the one made by Brother Judson? Can it be a mistake then to call that Resolution unconstitutional, which withholds the aid of the American Bible Society from the printing and distributing of these versions?

The Rule imposed upon Missionaries in the solemn and arduous work of translation, has been designated as *unscriptural*. It confines the patronage of the Society to such versions only as conform to the principle of their translation to the common English version: a version made by Peshdopists, and which, in many particulars, has been shown to be inaccurate.

Your Board of Missions at the annual meeting held in Salem, April 1833, unanimously passed the following Resolutions, viz:

"Resolved, That the Board feel it to be their duty to adopt all prudent measures to give to the heathen the pure word of God in their own languages, and to furnish their Missionaries with all the means in their power, to make their translations as exact a representation of the mind of the Holy Spirit, as may be possible."

"Resolved, That all the Missionaries of the Board, who are, or who shall be, engaged in translating the Scriptures, be instructed to endeavor, by earnest prayer and diligent study, to ascertain the precise meaning of the original text; to express that meaning as exactly as the nature of the languages, into which they shall translate the Bible, will permit, and to transfer no words, which are capable of being literally translated."

These Resolutions express the sentiments of our denomination, and are strictly conformed to the principles of sound criticism and Christian duty. They direct the translator of God's Word to search diligently after the mind of the Spirit, untrammelled by the will of man; and any Rule which prescribes a contrary principle, is certainly unscriptural.

For many years I have laboured with great pleasure in connexion with the American Bible Society, and will yield none in the honest and ardent attachment

uniformly felt for its interests. A kindred sentiment has been cherished by the denominations; and while the Friends, the Methodists, and the Episcopalians, have organized Bible Societies of their own, the Baptists have adhered to the National Institution. We loved it because, in the eloquent language of its founders, "all voices, and affections, and hands, were joined in the grand design, of promoting peace on earth and good will towards men—of resisting the advance of misery—of carrying the light of instruction into the dominions of ignorance, and the balm of joy to the soul of anguish; and all this by diffusing the oracles of God!" We have seen that in this work "whatever is dignified, kind, venerable, true, has had ample scope;—while Sectarian littleness and rivalry; could find no avenue of admission."

Such language once appropriately described the operations of the American Bible Society. To the Baptists, liberal and impartial aid, in that field of foreign distribution which Divine providence had so evidently assigned them, was cheerfully awarded; patronage was promptly afforded to received versions where they existed, and to the most faithful where they were required; and all responsibility touching the accuracy of translations was left, where it ought to be left, with the Translator and the Denomination sustaining him.—Whether it was so understood, or not, it is nevertheless a fact, that in all the appropriations hitherto made for the printing and circulation of the Scriptures among the heathen, the Board of the American Bible Society, has acted upon this principle of harmony, and usefulness, and still increasing success, have been its precious fruits. A different principle has now been adopted, and the possibility of conducting the affairs of the Society in accordance with its requirements, has been denied. This appears to be so obvious as to require little proof. Many of the Bibles now daily distributed, are not conformed, in the principle of their translation, to the English version; a certificate of the conformity of others cannot be furnished for a great while to come; and to the Chinese version, as at present advised, the Baptists must object; it cannot be consistently used in their schools and communities. The Rule therefore, is utterly impracticable and it will soon be seen that both in its letter and spirit, it must of necessity be frequently violated.

The injustice of the measure, is one of its most objectionable features. The Resolution professes to be founded upon the general principle; but in practice we think, it will affect only the particular case.—Roman Catholic versions will continue to be circulated, although they contain the perversion which distinguishes that sect from all evangelical Christians; and in modern translations, no matter how strong the denominational spirit with which they may be imbued, the Board, not possessing the miraculous gift of tongues, can take no cognizance of their peculiarities. Under this new Rule then, it is apprehended, one only question will ever be asked, and this will be the *sine qua non*—"Is *Baptizo* translated?"

To illustrate the charge of injustice, the instance of the German Scriptures was adduced; and it was proved by the irrefragable testimony of Luther himself, the Translator, that he had rendered *Baptizo*, to *immerse*. It was then asked, is it just is it equitable, is it consistent, for the American Bible Society to own Stereotype plates of Luther's version; to print and distribute copies of it continually; and at the same time absolutely refuse further aid to Judson's Burman Bible?

But it is not necessary longer to dwell upon this subject. We have endeavored to look at it with calmness, under the influence of the Saviour's Golden Rule, "as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." And yet, when we remember the silence, at least, of the Constitution of the American Bible Society, on the point concerning which the managers have assumed the prerogative of legislation; when we consider the position which our denomination has long occupied in relation to the Bible cause; our subscriptions, donations, and bequests; the commendatory Resolutions annually passed by our Missionary Societies, Associations, and State Conventions, in favor of the National Institution; and the facilities we now enjoy of circulating the Oracles of Truth among millions of immortal fellow-creatures; is it too much to say that the Resolution we have so decidedly opposed is in its bearing upon the Baptists unkind, ungenerous, and unjust?

Your Board of Missions will hold their anniversary, by appointment, at Hartford Connecticut, the last Wednesday of April next, and such members as cannot make it convenient to attend the meeting, will not fail I hope, to communicate their sentiments upon the important facts now submitted to your profound consideration.—We have fallen upon eventful times.—Many Nations must receive from us the Bible; and to accomplish this, our energies and resources must be increased, concentrated, and wisely directed. Under existing circumstances, it becomes us as a people with devout solicitude to enquire, LORD! WHAT WILT THOU HAVE US TO DO?

That we may be directed to pursue that course, and that only which shall be well pleasing in the sight of the God of the Bible, is the fervent prayer of your fellow-